

**PRELIMINARY STAFF REPORT
2009-2010 SOUTH COUNTY AREA PLANS REVIEW**

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: Mount Vernon **APR ITEM:** 09-IV-23MV

NOMINATOR(S): Pat Rea on behalf of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations

ACREAGE: 1.9 acres

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 83-3 ((1)) 22A and 22B1

GENERAL LOCATION: North of the intersection of Richmond and North Kings Highways

PLANNING AREA(S): IV
District(s): Mount Vernon
Sector: Huntington (MV1)
Special Area: Penn Daw Community Business Center (CBC) Land Unit F-2

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: Retail and other use

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Retail use up to an intensity of 0.35 floor-area ratio (FAR) or a gateway park, if an interchange is constructed.

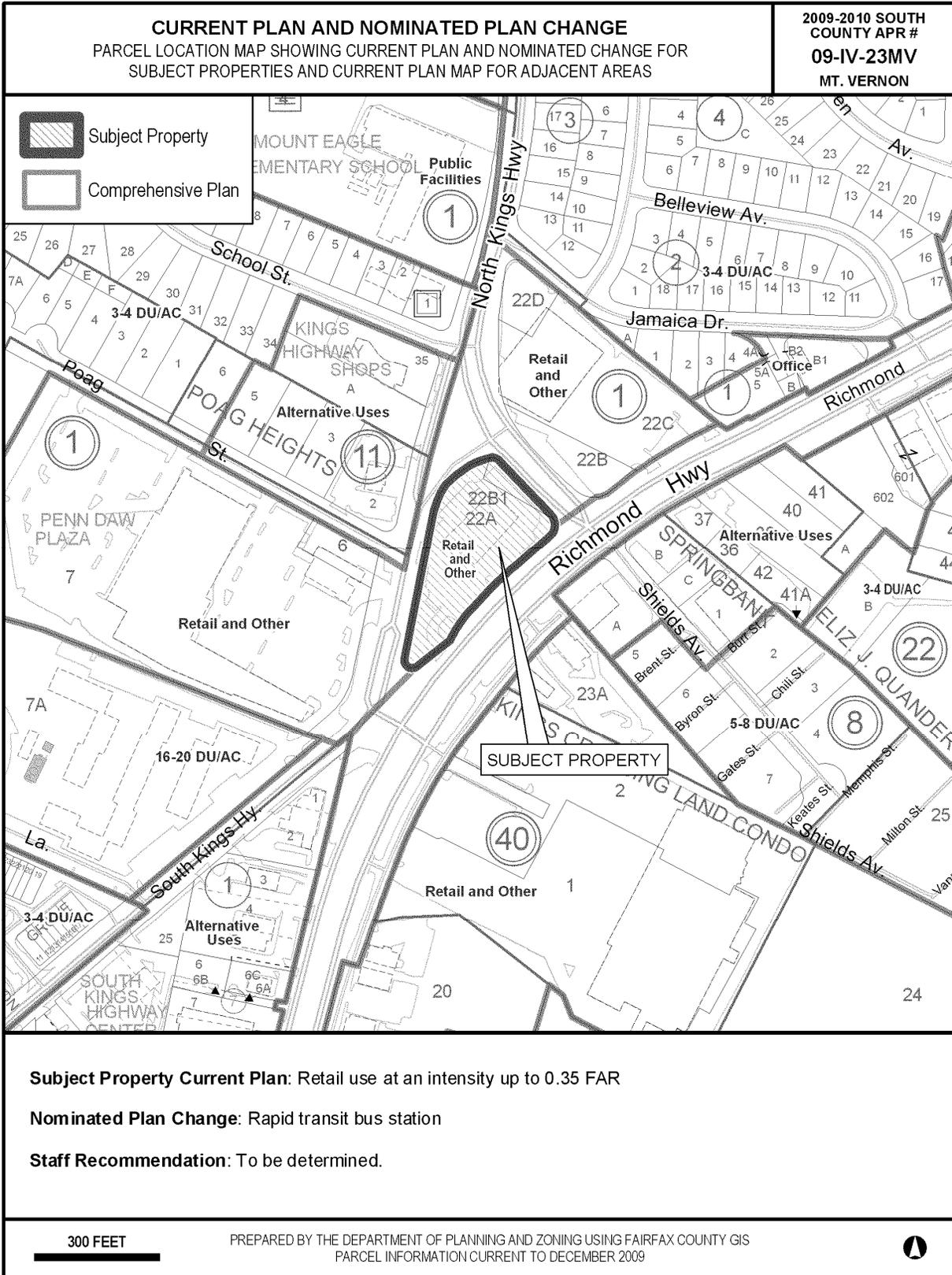
For complete Plan text see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area4/mtvernon1.pdf>,
Page 36

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Replan land unit for rapid transit bus station.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Approve Nomination as submitted
- Approve Staff Alternative
- Retain Adopted Plan

The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) is currently studying transit along the Richmond Highway corridor and is working to identify the appropriate locations for transit facilities. Replanning the subject property as proposed would be premature without conclusions of this study from FCDOT. The current Plan for the subject property also recommends that a gateway park should be located on the property should a substantial part of the land unit be needed for an interchange. However, the recommendation for the interchange was removed from the Transportation Plan Map in 2005 in favor of an at-grade intersection, and the Plan text inadvertently was not updated. As a result, an editorial update should be made at this time to correct the error and to remove the language about the interchange, and the recommendation for the gateway park should be reevaluated to ensure that the recommendation remains appropriate.



PROPOSED NOMINATION

The nomination proposes that the land unit be replanned to accommodate a rapid transit bus facility for bus service along Richmond Highway, South Kings Highway, and North Kings Highway to support surrounding communities in the CBC. Interim uses would not be appropriate. The nomination also proposes that a small amount of surface parking should be provided with pedestrian crosswalks and bicycle storage. The nominator further proposes that Fairfax County purchase the parcels for this use.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Land Use:

- The approximately 2-acre subject property is located in the intersection of North Kings and Richmond Highways. The property contains a vacant drug store and associated surface parking.
- The subject property is located in Land Unit F-2 of the Penn Daw Community Business Center (CBC) in the Richmond Highway Corridor. The property is currently planned for retail use up to 0.35 floor-area ratio (FAR) or a gateway park, if substantial land is required for the interchange improvement of the two highways.
- The proposed designation of the subject property as a transit station is used as justification for proposed significant increases to intensity of development at the Penn Daw Plaza (APR 09-IV-22MV, APR 09-I-24MV) and Kings Crossing properties (APR 09-IV-25MV, 09-IV26MV).

Transportation

- The Fairfax County Department of Transportation is currently in the process of studying the Richmond Highway corridor, between the Huntington Metrorail Station and Fort Belvoir, to determine effective locations for new transit transfer centers and parking facilities. Based on existing transit data of boardings and alightings (disembarking the bus) at bus stops along the Richmond Highway corridor, as well as population and employment estimates within walking distance of the bus stops, the County is currently exploring potential transit transfer center locations further to the south of this site, such as Ladson Lane and Lockheed Boulevard. The transit, population, and employment data does not highly support a location here.
- The close proximity of the subject area to the Metro station, approximately ¾ mile, raises concern that transit and/or park and ride users would not optimally utilize a station at this location.
- Full access to and from the site would be limited to North Kings Highway on the northwest side of the site. Traffic signals, turn lanes, medians, and other constraints would prohibit full access to and from Richmond Highway or Shields Avenue. Buses that currently stop on the street would have to pull into the site, posing potential scheduling issues. This diversion would add several minutes of run time to each route.
- Parking on-site may be problematic, given the size and shape of the site. Further review and analysis would be required to determine if separation of autos and buses can be accomplished. In addition, as mentioned previously, with the Huntington Metro Station

located just ¾ miles to the north, it is questionable as to whether transit users would use this location for parking.

- Given the proposal to include parking on-site, it is uncertain how a development plan would address potential safety concerns associated with conflicts, on-site, between autos and buses, buses and pedestrians, and pedestrians and autos.
- Although this land unit may not be appropriate for a station, the North Kings Highway and Richmond Highway corridors remain designated as Enhanced Public Transportation Corridors, with a range of transit options and technologies to be studied for future implementation. This corner site may prove to be a vital connection for the transit movement from the North Kings Highway alignment (connecting from the Huntington Metrorail Station) to the Richmond Highway alignment (connecting to Fort Belvoir and points south), depending on the selected technology and alignments.

Parks and Recreation

- The subject property is surrounded on all sides by major roads and is poorly located to serve as an active local park.
- The property's location at a major intersection, however, is ideal to serve as a focal point for the community. The Park Authority supports the use of a portion of the site, in conjunction with other uses, as a passive gateway feature. The Park Authority's Urban Parks Framework defines a gateway feature as "Space such as a median strip, traffic island, or landscaped corner that signals entry into an area creates the first impression of an area and usually contains one or more visual amenities." A visual amenity is defined as "A single statue, fountain, sign, planter, or work of art that draws attention and adds to the character or identity of a place."
- A portion of the site should be retained for used as a gateway feature.

Editorial Updates

- With the completion of road improvements at the intersection of North Kings Highway and Richmond Highway, the Tax Map parcel numbers that comprise Sub-unit F-2 of the Penn Daw CBC have changed. Sub-unit F-2 now consists of 83-3 ((1)) 22A and 22B1. The Comprehensive Plan should be updated to correctly state the new parcel numbers.
- The Board of Supervisors adopted Plan Amendment S04-CW-T1 (Amendment Number 2003-18) on March 7, 2005. The Plan amendment modified the Transportation Plan Map and corresponding Comprehensive Plan text figures to remove the recommendation for a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of North and South Kings Highway and Richmond Highway. The grade-separated interchange was removed in favor of an at-grade intersection design. The recommendation for the interchange improvement in the Plan text for Land Unit F-2 inadvertently remained and should be removed at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, Area IV, Mount Vernon Planning District, Richmond Highway Corridor, Penn Daw CBC, Land Unit F-2, page 36, as amended through August 3, 2009:

“Sub-unit F-2

Parcels within this sub-unit include 83-3((1)) 22A and ~~a portion of Parcel 22B₁~~ and are planned for retail use up to .35 FAR. ~~If substantial land is required for interchange improvements, the remaining property should also be acquired for use as a gateway park to provide~~ A gateway feature should be provided on the sub-unit to serve as a focal point for the Penn Daw Community Business Center.”